

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 01311 100446Z
ACTION AF-10

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FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
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INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, SF
SUBJ: POLICE RAID SQUATTERS AT WHITE CHURCHES

REF: (A) CAPE TOWN 1249, (B) CAPE TOWN 1205

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING DESTRUCTION OF MODDERDAM AND WERKGENOT SQUATTERS CAMPS IN LATE AUGUST, NUMBER OF COLORED AND WHITE CHURCHES ERECTED TENTS ON CHURCH GROUNDS TO HOUSE SEVERAL THOUSAND SQUATTERS. MORNING OF SEPT 9 POLICE STAGED PRE-DAWN RAID AT 2 LEADING WHITE CHURCHES, ARRESTING OVER 100 SQUATTERS. TRANSKEI AMBASSADOR ISSUED STATEMENT CRITICIZING SAG FOLLOWING MEETING WITH CONCERNED CITIZENS COMMITTEE HERE. END SUMMARY

1. REFTELS REPORTED COMPLETION OF DESTRUCTION OF MODDERDAM AND WERKGENOT SQUATTER CAMPS WITH ESTIMATED POPULATION OF UP TO 15,000 PEOPLE. SINCE THEN, CHURCH LEADERS, IN EFFORT TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY SHELTER FOR AT LEAST

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PAGE 02 CAPE T 01311 100446Z

SOME OF THOSE RENDERED HOMELESS AND TO DRAMATIZE THE ISSUE OF CONTINUING DEMOLITIONS, ERECTED TENTS ON CHURCH GROUNDS PROVIDING ACCOMMODATION FOR AN ESTIMATED 3,000 PEOPLE. ROMAN CATHOLIC AND ANGLICAN CHURCHES IN BOTH WHITE AND COLORED AREAS RESPONDED TO THE CALL BY CHURCH LEADERS. MOST VISIBLE AND CONTROVERSIAL WERE THE "TENT CITIES" ESTABLISHED AT ANGLICAN

ST. GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL LOCATED DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT IN DOWNTOWN CAPE TOWN AND AT ST. THOMAS' CHURCH IN POSH WHITE SUBURB OF RONDEBOSCH.

2. INITIAL POLICE RESPONSE WAS CAUTIOUS AND LOW-KEY BUT BY EARLY THIS WEEK TEAMS OF POLICE AND OFFICIALS BEGAN VISITING SEVERAL CHURCHES IN COLORED AREAS OF CITY, DISMANTLING AND CONFISCATING TENTS. MORNING OF SEPT 9 POLICE RAIDED ST. GEORGE'S AND ST. THOMAS' AT 4:30 AM, INSPECTING DOCUMENTS AND, ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, ARRESTING MORE THAN 100 MALES. WOMEN SQUATTERS WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY ARRESTED BUT WERE GIVEN SUMMONS TO APPEAR IN COURT SEPT 26 ON CHARGE OF LIVING IN A WHITE AREA.

3. DAY BEFORE RAIDS WERE CARRIED OUT, TRANSKEI AMBASSADOR TO SA, PROF. N.J. NJISANE, MET WITH CONCERNED CITIZENS COMMITTEE HEADED BY PROG MP NIC OLIVER. (CAPE TOWN 1205). AFTER THE MEETING, NJISANE ISSUED STATEMENT SAYING TRANSKEI UNABLE TO HOUSE OR PROVIDE WORK FOR "LARGE INFLUX" OF SQUATTERS AND EXPRESSING "FRUSTRATION" AT INABILITY TO GET SAG TO NEGOTIATE THE ISSUE. NJISANE QUOTED AS SAYING THAT SAG ACTIONS WERE CAUSING TRANSKEIANS TO QUESTION WISDOM OF OPTING FOR INDEPENDENCE. HE ADDED THAT THROUGH INTERVENTION OF TRANSKEI OFFICIALS SAG HAD AGREED TO DELAY DEMOLITION OF UNIBELL CAMP (THOUGHT TO CONTAIN ANOTHER 15-20,000 PEOPLE) FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CAPE T 01311 100446Z

2 WEEKS UNTIL SEPT 15 ALTHOUGH HE HAD ASKED FOR THREE MONTHS DELAY.

4. COMMENT - BULK OF 15,000 SQUATTERS EVICTED TO DATE HAVE RELOCATED IN OTHER SQUATTER CAMPS OR MOVED INTO ALREADY CROWDED QUARTERS IN BLACK TOWNSHIPS. ONLY A MERE HANDFUL ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE RETURNED TO TRANSKEI OR CISKEI. NONETHELESS, SAG EFFORTS LIKELY TO CONTINUE. DEMOLITION OF CAMP AT KRAAIFONTEIN (2,000 PEOPLE) BEGAN SEPT 8 BUT WAS HALTED AFTER COMMENCEMENT OF HEAVY RAINS. AS WEATHER BEGINS TO IMPROVE, SAG PROGRAM TO CLEAR SQUATTER CAMPS SEEM LIKELY TOCONTINUE. FRUSTRATION OF CHURCHMEN AND OTHER "LIBERALS" AT INABILITY TO DEFLECT SAG FROM ITS PATH AND TO EFFECTIVELY ASSIST SQUATTERS IS INTENSE AND MAY LEAD TO RASH ACTS ON PART OF A FEW INDIVIDUALS. THERE IS NO RPT NO SIGN THAT CRITICISM BY TRANSKEI OFFICIALS LIKELY TO HAVE SUFFICIENT WEIGHT TO SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE SAG POLICY. WILLIAMS

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